

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 /043 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 635

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6884

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY BANGKOK DATED
MARCH 29 RPTD FOR YOUR ACTION:

QUOTE:
UDORN 0073

E.O. 11652: GD
TAGS: PINT, TH
SUBJECT: INSURGENT DEFECTORS AND STUDENT TRAINEES

REF: BANGKOK 6191

1. CONREP DISCUSSED POINTS RAISED REFTEL WITH INTELLIGENCE CHIEF, BPP REGION 3 COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, IN UBON PROVINCE CAPITAL, MARCH 25.
2. INTELL CHIEF SAID THAT UBON GOVERNOR CHAMNOON CHANCHAMONG'S CLAIM OF 60 INSURGENT DEFECTORS IN PROVINCE DURING LAST TWO MONTHS, AS REPORTED IN BANGKOK PRESS MARCH 22, IS GREATLY EXAGGERATED. INTELL CHIEF, WHO SAID HE ALSO SERVES AS ISOC INTERROGATOR, STATED TPAT HE VISITED UBON ISOC DETENTION CENTER MARCH 24 AND OBSERVED EIGHT (8) INSURGENT DEFECTORS PRESENTLY BEING HELD IN CENTER. HE ADDED THAT HE IS NOT AWARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF DEFECTORS IN PROVINCE SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR.

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3. INTELL CHIEF NOTED THAT GOVERNOR CHAMNOON'S STATEMENT, ALSO REPORTED IN PRESS, THAT 300 THAI STUDENTS ARE RECEIVING INSURGENT TRAINING IN THREE CAMPS IN LAOS APPEARS TO BE A REASONABLY ACCURATE ESTIMATE. HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO BPP SOURCES, THERE ARE THREE SUCH TRAINING CAMPS IN SOUTHERN LAOS WITH ESTIMATED POTENTIAL CAPACITY TO TRAIN 100 STUDENTS EACH. HOWEVER, INTELL CHIEF POINTED OUT THAT, BASED ON INFORMATION

OBTAINED FROM SEVERAL DEFECTORS AND OTHER SOURCES, STUDENTS CURRENTLY BEING TRAINED IN THESE CAMPS ARE NOT RPT NOT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BUT RATHER PRIMARILY VILLAGE YOUTHS WITH ONLY SEVERAL YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION. FURTHERMORE, TYPE OF TRAINING THEY APPEAR TO BE RECEIVING IS ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL, RATHER THAN MILITARY OR ESPIONAGE ORIENTED. INTELL CHIEF NOTED ADDITIONALLY THAT AVAILABLE INFORMATION SUGGESTS THAT MORALE OF STUDENT TRAINEES IS LOW, WITH MANY APPARENTLY DECIDING TO RETURN TO THAILAND RATHER THAN COMPLETE TRAINING.

4. INTELL CHIEF EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT GOVERNOR CHAMNOON, ASSIGNED TO UBON FROM NEIGHBORING ROI-ET PROVINCE LAST OCTOBER, STILL HAS MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT NATURE AND EXTENT OF INSURGENCY IN HIS PROVINCE. HE ADVISED, THEREFORE, THAT GOVERNOR'S COMMENTS ON INSURGENCY MATTERS, PARTICULARLY AS WHEN REPORTED BY PRESS, BE REGARDED WITH CAUTION.

5. CONSUL PLANS TO MAKE REGULAR, PERIODIC VISIT TO UBON APRIL 1 AND WILL CHECK BPP INTELL CHIEF ASSESSMENT AGAINST OTHER SOURCES AVAILABLE TO US. SIGNED FINNEY. UNQUOTE. BURKE

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